
ROBINSON
CRUSOE
SERIES
THE
STORY
OF
ROBIN
HOOD

Robin Hood



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# THE STORY OF ROBIN HOOD.



IT was about seven hundred years ago, in England, when Richard the First was King, that Robin Hood lived. At that time a large part of the land was covered with great forests, in which deer and other game ran wild; and it was near the borders of one of these, called Sherwood Forest, that Robin Hood was born.

From his earliest years he had a great love for all the manly out-door sports and games of those times, and he became very expert at them; above all, in the use of the bow and arrow. He grew so skillful in this that there was no archer in all the country round who could compare with him, and he always carried off the prizes at the shooting matches. Besides this, he had bright wits, and a merry heart; loved a song and a jest; and was liked by nearly everybody who knew him.

But something took place which drove him into a way of life that, otherwise, he might not have chosen for himself. In those days all the game, in the forest belonged to the King; it was against the law to shoot it; and the King had men in the forest, called foresters, to catch those who did so and have them punished. One day, as Robin Hood was passing through the forest, he met with a party of these foresters. One of them was a man who had a great name as an archer, and was jealous of Robin Hood's growing fame. He began to taunt Robin, and at last dared him to show his skill by shooting a deer which came in sight at a great distance. Robin Hood's temper was up; and, without thinking, he put an arrow in his bow and let it fly at the deer, which it struck and killed. The forester only became more angry at this feat, which was one that he could not do himself, so he said he would take Robin and have him hung for killing the King's deer. Robin started to fly, but the foresters pursued him so closely that he saw no chance of escaping, so he turned, and again drawing his bow, sent an arrow into the heart of the man who had begun the quarrel. He dropped dead, while his comrades stood still, not knowing but that they might be served as badly, so Robin Hood escaped.

But as there would now be no mercy shown to him if any of the King's men laid hands upon him, he became an outlaw, that is, he lived in the forest, and got his food by shooting the deer and other game, trying of course not to come in



the way of the foresters. Now there were many other young men who, from one cause and another, had taken to this kind of life, and Robin Hood soon gathered them into a band of which he was made captain, and which became so strong that in the end they were more of a terror to the foresters than the foresters to them. They wore a uniform of Lincoln green, with scarlet caps; and besides his bow and arrows, each man had a short sword; while the captain carried a bugle-horn with which to call his men when he needed them.

They led a pleasant life in the greenwood, but it was an entirely unlawful one, for besides shooting the game, they used to rob rich people who passed through the forest. But Robin Hood, though a robber, was in many ways so good that he was thought well of by most people; for he would not take from those who were poor—instead, he often gave them help. He would let none of his men hurt or rob a woman, and when the weak were wronged he took their part.

He gave a proof of this one day when he stopped a knight named Sir Richard of the Lea, who was passing, with two followers, through the forest. Robin saw that the knight wore a very sad face, and he asked why this was so. The knight replied that he had met with losses, and had been forced to mortgage his lands to the Abbot of St. Mary's at York, who, if the money were not paid next day, would seize all he had. Robin Hood was touched by the sadness of the knight, and agreed to lend him the sum needed to redeem his lands. The knight departed in great joy, and this kind deed was told of, far and wide, to Robin Hood's great credit.

Robin Hood's dearest friend, and the next in command to himself, was called Little John. The way in which they came together was this. Robin liked to roam the forest by himself in search of adventures; and one day, as he was passing thus along a forest path, he came to a brook over which a narrow plank was laid





ROBIN HOOD'S COMBAT WITH LITTLE JOHN.

became a question which should go back. "Let me pass," said the stranger, "or it will be the worse for thee."

Robin laughed at the idea of any one trying to scare him by threats, and told the stranger to go back or he would put an arrow through him.

"Then," said the other, "thou art a coward, for none other would offer to use a bow and arrows against a man armed only with a quarter staff."

Now Robin Hood was anything but a coward, and could not bear to do that which would give anybody a right to call him one; so he stepped aside and cut for himself a staff of oak.

"Now," said he, "we are equal, we will fight it out, and whichever first knocks the other into the water shall be victor."

The stranger was seven feet tall, and though Robin Hood was expert in the use of the quarter staff, he found him more than a match. After they had thumped each other well for a while, the stranger at last hit Robin a blow which sent him into the brook. He waded to the bank while the stranger stood and laughed at him. Then Robin Hood sounded his horn, and his men came running from all sides. When he told them how he had been served they wished to give the stranger a taste of the water too, but Robin, who was very much pleased with his strength and skill, stopped them, and asked the stranger if he would not be one of his merry-men.

"Most willingly," cried he, "and though my name is John Little, I hope you will find that I can do great things!"

The merry-men laughed when they heard the big stranger's name; and one of them said that it should be changed from John Little to Little John, which was done, and he was ever after called that way.



Another time, as Robin Hood was walking through the greenwood, he found a fat friar sitting near a brook, and thought he would have some sport with him, so he said:

"Carry me over the brook, fat friar, or I will beat thee till thou art sore."

The friar, without a word, tucked up his gown and carried him over, but as Robin started off, he cried:—

"Stop, my fine fellow, and carry me back or it will cause thee sorrow."

Robin took the friar on his back, and carried him over, and set him down, saying:—



"Now, take me over once more, fat friar. As thou art twice my weight, it is right I should have two rides to thy one."

The friar again took him on his back, but in the middle of the stream he threw him in the water, saying: "Now, my pretty youth, let us see if thou canst swim." Then he went laughing on his way. But Robin was angry, and ran after him, and attacked him with his staff. The friar defended himself, and they fought for a long time without either getting the best of it. Finally, when both were tired out, Robin Hood told the friar who he was, and asked him if he would not like to join his band and be their chaplain. The friar was a jolly fellow, and was quite willing to take Robin's offer. So he became one of the merry-men, and was almost as famous as Robin Hood himself, being known as Friar Tuck.

Robin, before he became an outlaw, had been in love with a young maiden named Marian, but he had not seen her since. Her love for him did not die out, however; and finally her longing to see him became so great that she put on boy's clothes, and went to seek him in the forest. She met him at last; but he did not know her in her strange dress, and she would not, at first, tell him who she was, but drew her sword and dared him to fight. He, of course, soon overcame her; so she took off her cap, and let her beautiful hair fall over her shoulders, and then Robin Hood knew her. He still loved her as much as ever, and they were soon married by Friar Tuck, the merry-men celebrating their wedding with great festivity.



It was the way of the outlaws when they caught travelers who seemed likely to have much gold or silver about them to take them to dine with Robin Hood. After they had been feasted he would see how much they had, and would make them pay for their enter-



KING RICHARD PARDONS ROBIN AND HIS MEN.

tainment according to their means. One day they brought before him a rich Abbot, the same who had been so harsh with Sir Richard of the Lea. Robin Hood resolved that besides taking his gold, he would put him to shame; so after they had stripped him of all his money, they tied him upon a mule's back, with his face to the tail, and in that ridiculous posture sent him out of the forest, amidst hooting and laughter.

One day, as he was on his way to the town of Nottingham, Robin Hood fell in with a traveling tinker and asked him for the news. "Surely," said he, "wandering about as thou dost, thou must hear a great deal."

"Ay," said the tinker, "I do, and the latest I have heard is the best."

"What may that be?" asked Robin.

"It is," replied the other, that at last there is to be an effort made to catch that thief, Robin Hood. He has done mischief enough in this forest. I have a warrant, myself, from the Sheriff of Nottingham to catch him; and it would be worth a hundred pounds to me if I could find him."



Robin laughed to himself at this, but went on talking to the tinker until they came to Nottingham. Here he invited the tinker to go with him to an inn, where he treated him so liberally to ale that he became drunk, and, finally, fell asleep. When he awoke, Robin Hood had gone, and the Sheriff's warrant was missing too. The tinker called the landlord, and told him of his loss. "Why," said the landlord, laughing, "thou hast been cheated; that was Robin Hood himself."

The tinker at once started to hunt for Robin again: and was lucky enough to meet him in the forest the next day. He attacked him immediately with a thick club that he carried, while Robin defended himself as best he could with his oaken staff, which was the only weapon he had with him. They fought long, on nearly even terms, until at last Robin's staff broke beneath the stout blows of the tinker, who then called upon him to yield or he would crack his skull.

Robin blew his horn for help, and Little John and another came to his aid. They seized the tinker and were going to hang him to a tree, but he was such a fine, stout fellow that Robin Hood thought he would like to add him to his band So he proposed that he should join, saying that he would give him the hundred

pounds reward which he had lost. This was too good an offer to be refused, so the tinker agreed, and Robin said that as he was a man of *metal* by trade, he hoped he would prove a man of *mettle* by nature.

But it happened, at last, that King Richard had occasion to journey into that part of the country where Sherwood Forest lay; and there he heard so much of the doings of Robin Hood, and of the way in which he evaded capture, that he made up his mind that something must be done to put an end to such defiance of authority. But he was advised that it would be useless to try to come at Robin Hood with a force of troops, as he knew the forest so well, and how to hide in it, that he had no trouble in escaping from pursuit when the greater strength of his foes made him choose not to fight.



So the King concluded to go into the forest alone, wearing plain black armor, and without anything to show that he was King; hoping in this way to meet Robin Hood, and learn for himself what kind of man he might be.

He had not ridden many miles before he was called upon to halt by Robin Hood himself, who took him for some obscure knight. The King had been a Crusader, and wore the red cross which was borne by those who had gone to the Holy Land to fight; and as Robin Hood had a great respect for all such, he addressed the supposed knight in a friendly way, and invited him to come and dine with him.

The King consented, and Robin Hood led him to where the merry-men held their feasts, ,and they all sat down to a banquet of the best the forest afforded. The guest proved a jolly companion, and did his share in the way of joke and song.

Being curious to know if Robin Hood and his men were as wonderful shots as report made them out to be, the King, after the meal, turned the talk on to the subject of archery, and Robin Hood was soon led into giving an exhibition of the skill of himself and his band. Two rods were set up at a distance which the King,



FRIAR TUCK CARRIES ROBIN HOOD OVER THE WATER.



ROBIN HOOD STOPS THE KNIGHT IN BLACK ARMOR.

from his knowledge of archery, thought to be too distant by at least fifty paces. But Robin Hood said that his men must shoot at no nearer mark, and that by their rules, he who missed should receive a stout blow as a penalty. When the shooting began, the King could not help expressing his admiration at its accuracy; and the infliction of the penalty in the few cases in which shots were missed made him laugh heartily. Finally he spoke to Robin Hood and said:

"Robin Hood, I have much credit with the King. How would it be if I could get him to forgive thy misdoings? Wouldst thou be one of his men and serve him faithfully?"

This was what Robin wished more than all else in the world. "I would be glad," said he, "to give up the life I lead. I did not like it from the first. Some men praise my deeds; but, for my own part, I hate my way of living. King Richard is a brave prince, and if he would but forgive me, he would find me as true, and as full of love for him, as any man in his service."

"I am King Richard," said the knight, as he stood up with a majestic air; and when he had said this, Robin Hood and all his men fell down on their knees before him.

"Stand up, my brave men," said the King. "You have been thieves, which you should not have been, but you are able to serve me if you will. I will forgive what you have done up to this time, but take care that your acts from henceforth are such that I shall feel no grief for the way I now treat you."

Then Robin and his men arose and gave three cheers for the King.



When the King returned to London, Robin and many of his men went with him, while those who remained were made foresters. Robin rose so high in the King's favor that he became rich, and was made Earl of Huntingdon. He continued to be as kind-hearted as ever, and never refused to help the poor and unfortunate, when it was in his power to aid them.

He lived at court many years; but when he grew to be an old man, a great longing took possession of him to return to the forest and resume the merry life he had led there in his younger days. So he got the King's permission to leave the court, and with his dear friend, Little John, who shared his longing, he sought his old haunts in Sherwood.

He found a few of his old comrades still living there, and spent some time very happily with them. But one day, as he was walking with Little John, he said:

"We have shot many deer together, Little John, but to-day I feel as though I could shoot no more."

"Why sayest thou so, dear master," said Little John.

"I know not what ails me," said Robin Hood, "but my fingers seem too feeble to draw the bow. Help me to Kirkley's Priory, Little John, perhaps my cousin, the Prioress, may relieve me by letting a little blood."

So they set out for the Priory, but with all the assistance Little John could give him, the walk so fatigued Robin Hood that when they reached there he was very ill.

His cousin received him with great apparent friendship, and Little John left him in her care; but the Prioress, whether she meant it or not, bled him too freely. By some it is said that she bore enmity against him because of his treatment of the Abbot of St. Mary's and others of the clergy, and that having him in her power she could not refrain from taking revenge. However that may have been, Robin Hood lost so much blood that when Little John came again he found his master in a dying condition. When he asked Robin Hood if there were nothing he could do for him, he said:



"Bring me my bow and arrows, and open yonder window. I will shoot one more shot, and where the arrow falls, there bury me with my bow by my side."

So his bow was brought, and Little John supported him while, with all his remaining strength, he shot an arrow out of the window. He fell back exhausted, and soon breathed his last.

Then the heart-broken Little John, and his sorrowing comrades, bore him to the spot marked by the arrow; and there his grave was dug, and he was laid to rest as he had directed.

The End